

Cedar Hill a place for reflection

*Non-denominational retreat center
on Standish Shore gets a facelift*

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It's easy to miss the Cedar Hill Retreat Center. Only a wooden sign is visible from the road, off Standish Street in the Standish Shore neighborhood.

But that's just the atmosphere the center is looking for — a quiet, secluded place where people can go to recharge their spiritual batteries.

The main retreat house at Cedar Hill just underwent a major renovation, and the

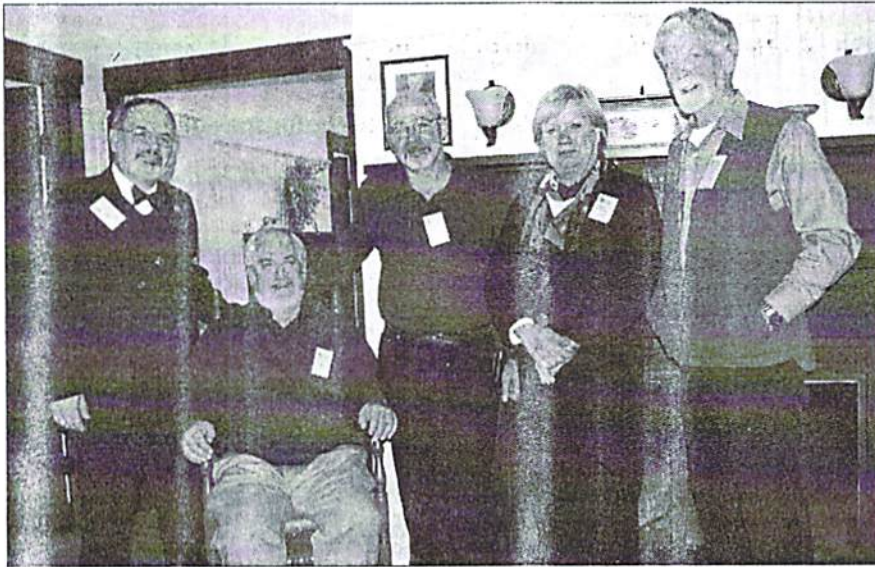
doors were opened to the public on Sunday afternoon.

Doug Friesen of Duxbrough Designs did the renovations, completely revamping the house, which sleeps 22 people.

"We literally took it down to the studs," said Cedar Hill Executive Director Laura Howerton.

Friesen said the house was originally an old barn that was moved into the current location and made into a summer

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The Cedar Hill Board of Directors gathers in the renovated retreat house on Sunday afternoon: Dan King, President Rich Evans, Doug Friesen, Sharon Nabreski and Deane Howard.

Cedar Hill Retreat a place to relax and recharge

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home. The home and the land was originally donated to the Unitarian Universalist Association, but it's now run as a non-denominational spiritual retreat.

"It will always be steeped in Unitarian Universalist tradition," said Howerton.

The retreat also includes 12 acres of conservation land under the direction of the Wildlands Trust, a labyrinth walk and 500 feet of beach.

Howerton is hoping the renovations will allow the center to expand their programming. Currently, the building is usually rented out as a whole by groups who use it for their own retreat. She said she'd like to run her own programs, such as a yoga weekend, where people could rent out the rooms one at a time. Howerton said she's hoping to attract more youth groups as well.

"We're hoping that people will use it to refresh themselves," she said. "Relax the mind, refresh the soul — that's kind of our tag line."

Cedar Hill is careful about



The house at the Cedar Hill Retreat Center, which sleeps 22, recently underwent a stem-to-stern renovation. The center's executive director hopes the work will help launch new programming.

the type of groups they allow to use the center. There's no technology — the only TV is a small set used for videos. The retreat center doesn't allow tents, bit parties or live music.

"We try to keep things simple," Howerton said.

She said the peaceful nature of the retreat house and the natural setting can do wonders for people looking for a break.

"Almost every group that I've seen leave here has a

sense of being centered and at peace," she said. "There's just a clarity and a sense of real peace about them."

Cedar Hill is currently working on a new Web site, but in the meantime you can find more information by e-mailing cedarhillretreat@gmail.com.